MPH Internship Waiver Handbook

Guidelines and Procedures for Requesting a Waiver of MPH Internship Credits Based on Previous Public Health Experience

School of Public Health
University at Albany
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Guidelines and Procedures for Requesting a Waiver of MPH Internship Credits Based on Previous Public Health Experience

The following information outlines the process, guidelines and requirements related to submitting an application requesting a waiver of MPH internship credits based on previous public health experience. Waiver requests are reviewed by the MPH Internship Waiver Committee which consists of at least one faculty representative from each of the School’s Departments. The Waiver Committee will first review written applications and then hold an individual interview with each applicant. Applications are approved on an individual case-by-case basis by the Committee.

Eligible Previous Public Health Experience

The previous experience must meet the definition of a public health experience:

The definition of public health from the Institute of Medicine Report, *The Future of Public Health* states: “Clearly, public health is ‘public’ because it involves ‘organized community effort.’ It is not simply the outcome of isolated individual efforts. Its mission is to ensure that organized approaches are mobilized when they are needed. For example, both smallpox vaccination of countless individuals and treatment of unvaccinated patients would not have rid us of smallpox without strategies aimed specifically at the community wide (in this case, the worldwide) level, such as epidemiologic studies, consistent reporting of cases, and organized distribution of vaccine. In a similar way, neither treatment of lung disease nor exhorting individuals to avoid smoking could have achieved the reduction of smoking in public places made possible by organized community effort to adopt laws and regulations restricting smoking. Seat belt legislation is still another instance in which a community wide approach has augmented individual effort.”

In general, a relevant public health experience must include at least one of the following components:

- Assessing, monitoring, or conducting surveillance of health problems/services in a population;
- Establishing health objectives and priorities;
- Conducting research on population-based health problems including biological, environmental, and behavioral issues;
- Developing and/or implementing policies and intervention strategies to meet public health needs; or
- Studying the natural history of disease or health-related effects in a population.

Based on this definition, individual delivery of patient care or individual education or counseling services does not constitute public health experience. A literature review is also not sufficient to qualify for a waiver of MPH Internship credits. Simply working in a public health setting, such as a hospital or a doctor’s office, is not sufficient to meet waiver qualifications.
Other general requirements and/or guidelines for waiving MPH Internship credits include the following:

- Internship waiver experiences may combine or crossover a variety of discipline-specific and interdisciplinary/cross-cutting competency areas and settings.

- Experiences may include only a portion of a full project (e.g., implementation of project with student having no involvement in the original needs assessment process, objectives development or evaluation).

- Although not a requirement, waivers are more likely to be granted when students have been supervised by public health professionals and the internship is conducted in an environment such as a local health department where there is opportunity for the student to apply public health principles and skills.

- Students are encouraged in their written waiver requests and presentations to the subcommittee to identify deficiencies and weaknesses of the public health experience and provide comments on how the project could have been improved.

- The internship experience should be sufficient to warrant a formal presentation in an oral or poster format.

- MPH students may request waivers of internship credit for work that was completed as part of a requirement for another graduate course of study (e.g., a credit-bearing previous graduate-level internship) that clearly involved public health experience. As indicated above, direct clinical experience does not constitute public health experience.

- Undergraduate internships are not eligible for an internship waiver.

- Students wishing to apply for a waiver of MPH internship credits can submit an application up until their last semester of coursework. If a waiver is not granted, students cannot graduate until their internship requirements are met.

**Considerations for Requesting Waiver Credits**

**Waiving three (3) credits requires:**

1. Completion of at least 240 hours of the relevant public health experience.

2. Supervision by an individual that holds an advanced degree, ideally within the field of public health, and has a decision-making role within the organization. In cases where an individual has been practicing public health for numerous years and can offer a wealth of experiences, an advanced degree is not required.
3. The level of responsibility may be characterized as “entry level” but must have included activities related to one or more discipline specific competency areas.

**Waiving six (6) credits requires:**

1. Completion of at least 480 hours in the relevant public health experience.

2. The location of experience was in a health care, public health or other organizational setting or entity involved in the provision of public health/health care services/policy.

3. Supervision by an individual that holds an advanced degree, ideally within the field of public health, and has a decision-making role within the organization. In cases where an individual has been practicing public health for numerous years and can offer a wealth of experiences, an advanced degree is not required.

4. The level of responsibilities should be at least at a mid-level range requiring a fairly broad understanding of public health/care issues and demonstrating extensive experience with one or more of the discipline-specific competency areas and at least four of the interdisciplinary/crosscutting competency areas.

**Completing the Waiver Request Application**

Please read the “MPH Internship Waiver Request” Handbook in detail before submitting your request. Prepare a brief (5 page maximum) description of the previous public health experience that incorporates the following:

1) Indicates the number of hours worked.

2) Provides an overview of the following:
   a. project/activity/services delivered, etc.;
   b. provider or organizational setting; and,
   c. public health related training received as part of this experience.

3) Notes the credentials/professional background of the supervisor(s).

4) Explains, in detail, the student’s role in the project, specific activities performed and related responsibilities. (Published materials or other deliverables in support of the narrative may be included as an appendix or attachment. For publications, please list the citation or website where work is located.)

5) Demonstrates the public health relevance of the experience. Please address the following questions: How was your role in the project and the work that you did ‘public health’? What were the broader public health implications of your work?
6) Explains and provides specific examples of how the experience meets the minimum criteria outlined in the MPH Internship Waiver Handbook for the following:

   a. the number of credits being requested (see pp. 3-4)
   b. specific skills/discipline-specific competencies acquired or used during the experience. Please compose description of experience in 5 pages or less, double-spaced with 11 or 12 size font. NOTE: your description and perceived understanding of the discipline-specific competencies will be used by the committee as a guide to evaluate the application. (You do not need to do this for all competency areas, just those that are truly relevant)

**Submitting the Waiver Request Application**

The contents of this guide should be reviewed in careful detail by any student wishing to apply for a waiver. The following procedures explain the process of submitting applications. Due dates and instructions must be adhered to without exception.

Students are strongly encouraged to speak with their faculty advisor about their intent to submit a waiver application as well as the experience that they are requesting a waiver for. Students also need to make an appointment to discuss their waiver application with the Director of Internships & Career Services.

Students are responsible for submitting a hard copy of the completed application to the Internships & Career Services Office (Room 117). In addition, an electronic copy should be sent to the Director of Internships & Career Services by the assigned deadline.

It is the student’s responsibility to obtain signatures and deliver the appropriate documentation to the Internship & Career Services Office. Asking faculty advisors or staff to fulfill these responsibilities is NOT appropriate.

**If you are submitting a waiver request for two separate 3-credit experiences, you must submit TWO SEPARATE APPLICATIONS—one for each experience**.

Requests must be submitted to the Internships & Career Services Office by one of two dates during the year as follows:

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<tr>
<th>Semester</th>
<th>*Date Due</th>
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<tr>
<td>Fall</td>
<td>October 15th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>February 15th</td>
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* Exact dates are subject to change. Official deadlines will be conveyed through the Internships & Career Services listserv.
The electronic version of the application must be in the form of a single Word document and include the completed waiver request cover sheet available below. The Waiver Committee is most interested in the student’s five-page write-up. Any back-up documentation included should be absolutely critical to the application.

The electronic applications will be sent to the members of the Waiver Committee for review by the Director of Internships & Career Services. Committee Members will have several weeks to review applications prior to conducting in-person interviews of each applicant. The Committee will schedule one day for applicant interviews, typically in November for the fall round of applications and in March for the spring round of applications. All applicants must be available to interview with the Committee.

Based on the written application and individual interview, the student will receive a letter from the Waiver Committee indicating the Committee’s decision, including the number of credits approved. A copy of the letter will also be submitted to the student’s Department and to the Dean’s Office.

If the waiver is approved, the student may select the waiver experience to use as the topic for a poster to meet the Student Poster Day requirement.
## MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) COMPETENCIES

The master of public health (MPH) curriculum in graduate schools and programs of public health is organized around the five core disciplines of public health: Biostatistics, Epidemiology, Environmental Health Science, Health Policy and Management, and Social and Behavioral Sciences. Knowledge and skills in these disciplines equip our graduates to analyze and consider solutions to public health problems at the community, institutional, and societal levels. Below are the competencies outlined by the Association of the Schools of Public Health, and adopted by CEPH, the accrediting body for the University at Albany School of Public Health. *Each SPH student should be able to exhibit the competencies in their designated concentration area upon graduation.*

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<tr>
<th>CONCENTRATION AREA</th>
<th>COMPETENCIES/SKILLS</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES</strong></td>
<td>1. Specify the role of the immune system in population health.</td>
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<td>(Public Health Biology)</td>
<td>2. Describe how behavior alters human biology.</td>
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<td>3. Identify the ethical, social and legal issues implied by public health biology.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4. Explain the biological and molecular basis of public health.</td>
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<td>5. Explain the role of biology in the ecological model of population-based health.</td>
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<td>6. Explain how genetics and genomics affect disease processes and public health policy and practice.</td>
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<td>7. Articulate how biological, chemical and physical agents affect human health.</td>
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<td>8. Apply biological principles to development and implementation of disease prevention, control, or management programs.</td>
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<td>9. Apply evidence-based biological and molecular concepts to inform public health laws, policies, and regulations.</td>
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<td>10. Integrate general biological and molecular concepts into public health.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH</strong></td>
<td>1. Describe the direct and indirect human, ecological and safety effects of major environmental and occupational agents.</td>
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<td>2. Describe genetic, physiologic and psychosocial factors that affect susceptibility to adverse health outcomes following exposure to environmental hazards.</td>
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<td>3. Describe federal and state regulatory programs, guidelines and authorities that control environmental health issues.</td>
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<td>4. Specify current environmental risk assessment methods.</td>
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<td>5. Specify approaches for assessing, preventing and controlling environmental hazards that pose risks to human health and safety.</td>
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<td>6. Explain the general mechanisms of toxicity in eliciting a toxic response to various environmental exposures.</td>
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<td>7. Discuss various risk management &amp; risk communication approaches in relation to issues of environmental justice and equity.</td>
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<td>8. Develop a testable model of environmental insult.</td>
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<td><strong>EPIDEMIOLOGY</strong></td>
<td>1. Identify key sources of data for epidemiologic purposes.</td>
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<td>2. Identify the principles and limitations of public health screening programs.</td>
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<td>3. Describe a public health problem in terms of magnitude, person, time and place.</td>
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<td>4. Explain the importance of epidemiology for informing scientific, ethical, economic and political discussion of health issues.</td>
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<td>5. Comprehend basic ethical and legal principles pertaining to the collection, maintenance, use and dissemination of epidemiologic data.</td>
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<td>6. Apply the basic terminology and definitions of epidemiology.</td>
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<td>7. Calculate basic epidemiology measures.</td>
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<td>8. Communicate epidemiologic information to lay and professional audiences.</td>
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<td>9. Draw appropriate inferences from epidemiologic data.</td>
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<td>10. Evaluate the strengths and limitations of epidemiologic reports.</td>
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### HEALTH POLICY & MANAGEMENT

A multi-disciplinary field of inquiry & practice concerned with the delivery, quality & costs of health care for individuals & populations, with both a managerial and a policy concern with the structure, process and outcomes of health services including the costs, financing, organization, outcomes & accessibility of care.

1. Identify the main components and issues of the organization, financing and delivery of health services and public health systems in the U.S.
2. Describe the legal and ethical basis for public health and health services.
3. Explain methods of ensuring community health safety and preparedness.
4. Discuss the policy process for improving the health status of populations.
5. Apply the principles of program planning, development, budgeting, management and evaluation in organizational and community initiatives.
6. Apply principles of strategic planning and marketing to public health.
7. Apply quality and performance improvement concepts to address organizational performance issues.
8. Apply ‘systems thinking’ for resolving organizational problems.
9. Communicate health policy and management issues using appropriate channels and technologies.
10. Demonstrate leadership skills for building partnerships.

### SOCIAL BEHAVIOR & COMMUNITY HEALTH

Addresses the behavioral, social and cultural factors related to individual and population health and health disparities over the life course. Research and practice in this area contributes to the development, administration and evaluation of programs and policies in public health and health services to promote and sustain healthy environments and healthy lives for individuals and populations.

1. Identify basic theories, concepts and models from a range of social and behavioral disciplines used in public health research and practice.
2. Identify the causes of social and behavioral factors that affect health of individuals and populations.
3. Identify individual, organizational and community concerns, assets, resources and deficits for social and behavioral science interventions.
4. Identify critical stakeholders for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
5. Describe steps and procedures for the planning, implementation and evaluation of public health programs, policies and interventions.
6. Describe the role of social and community factors in both the onset and solution of public health problems.
7. Describe the merits of social and behavioral science interventions and policies.
8. Apply the evidence-based approaches in the development and evaluation of social and behavioral science interventions.
9. Apply ethical principles to public health program planning, implementation and evaluation.
10. Specify multiple targets and levels of intervention for social and behavioral science programs and/or policies.

### BIOSTATISTICS

The development and application of statistical reasoning and methods in addressing, analyzing and solving problems in public health; health care; and biomedical, clinical and population based research.

1. Describe the roles biostatistics serves in the discipline of public health.
2. Describe basic concepts of probability, random variation and commonly used statistical probability distributions.
3. Describe preferred methodological alternatives to commonly used statistical methods when assumptions are not met.
4. Distinguish among the different measurement scales and the implications for selection of statistical methods to be used based on these assumptions.
5. Apply descriptive techniques commonly used to summarize public health data.
7. Apply descriptive & inferential methodologies according to the type of study design for answering a particular research question.
8. Apply basic informatics techniques with vital statistics and public health records in the description of public health characteristics and in public health research and evaluation.
9. Interpret results of statistical analyses found in public health studies.
10. Develop written & oral presentations based on statistical analyses for both public health professionals and educated lay audiences.
### MASTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH (MPH) COMPETENCIES

**Interdisciplinary and Cross-Cutting Competencies**

The interdisciplinary/cross-cutting competencies in the six initial domains selected for the ASPH model – Communication and Informatics, Diversity and Culture, Leadership, Professionalism, Program Planning, and Systems Thinking – have become increasingly important to effective public health practice and, thus, are included, along with the five discipline-specific competency domains, in this model. Below are the interdisciplinary/cross-cutting competencies outlined by the Association of the Schools of Public Health, and adopted by CEPH, the accrediting body for the University at Albany School of Public Health.

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| **COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS** | 1. Describe how the public health information infrastructure is used to collect, process, maintain, and disseminate data.  
2. Describe how societal, organizational, and individual factors influence and are influenced by public health communications.  
3. Discuss the influences of social, organizational and individual factors on the use of information technology by end users.  
4. Apply theory and strategy-based communication principles across different settings and audiences.  
5. Apply legal and ethical principles to the use of information technology and resources in public health settings.  
6. Collaborate with communication and informatics specialists in the process of design, implementation, and evaluation of public health programs.  
7. Demonstrate effective written and oral skills for communicating with different audiences in the context of professional public health activities.  
8. Use information technology to access, evaluate, and interpret public health data.  
9. Use informatics methods and resources as strategic tools to promote public health.  
10. Use informatics and communication methods to advocate for community public health programs and policies. |
| **DIVERSITY AND CULTURE** | 1. Describe the roles of history, power, privilege and structural inequality in producing health disparities.  
2. Explain how professional ethics and practices relate to equity and accountability in diverse community settings.  
3. Explain why cultural competence alone cannot address health disparity.  
4. Discuss the importance and characteristics of a sustainable diverse public health workforce.  
5. Use the basic concepts and skills involved in culturally appropriate community engagement and empowerment with diverse communities.  
6. Apply the principles of community-based participatory research to improve health in diverse populations.  
7. Differentiate among availability, acceptability, and accessibility of health care across diverse populations.  
8. Differentiate between linguistic competence, cultural competency, and health literacy in public health practice.  
9. Cite examples of situations where consideration of culture-specific needs resulted in a more effective modification or adaptation of a health intervention.  
10. Develop public health programs and strategies responsive to the diverse cultural values and traditions of the communities being served. |

The ability to collect, manage and organize data to produce information and meaning that is exchanged by use of signs and symbols; to gather, process, and present information to different audiences in-person, through information technologies, or through media channels; and to strategically design the information and knowledge exchange process to achieve specific objectives.

The ability to interact with both diverse individuals and communities to produce or impact an intended public health outcome.
### LEADERSHIP

The ability to create and communicate a shared vision for a changing future; champion solutions to organizational and community challenges; and energize commitment to goals.

1. Describe the attributes of leadership in public health.
2. Describe alternative strategies for collaboration and partnership among organizations, focused on public health goals.
3. Articulate an achievable mission, set of core values, and vision.
4. Engage in dialogue and learning from others to advance public health goals.
5. Demonstrate team building, negotiation, and conflict management skills.
6. Demonstrate transparency, integrity, and honesty in all actions.
7. Use collaborative methods for achieving organizational and community health goals.
8. Apply social justice and human rights principles when addressing community needs.
9. Develop strategies to motivate others for collaborative problem solving, decision-making, and evaluation.

### PROFESSIONALISM

The ability to demonstrate ethical choices, values and professional practices implicit in public health decisions; consider the effect of choices on community stewardship, equity, social justice and accountability; and to commit to personal and institutional development.

1. Discuss sentinel events in the history and development of the public health profession and their relevance for practice in the field.
2. Apply basic principles of ethical analysis (e.g. the Public Health Code of Ethics, human rights framework, other moral theories) to issues of public health practice and policy.
3. Apply evidence-based principles and the scientific knowledge base to critical evaluation and decision-making in public health.
4. Apply the core functions of assessment, policy development, and assurance in the analysis of public health problems and their solutions.
5. Promote high standards of personal and organizational integrity, compassion, honesty and respect for all people.
6. Analyze determinants of health and disease using an ecological framework.
7. Analyze the potential impacts of legal and regulatory environments on the conduct of ethical public health research and practice.
8. Distinguish between population and individual ethical considerations in relation to the benefits, costs, and burdens of public health programs.
9. Embrace a definition of public health that captures the unique characteristics of the field (e.g., population-focused, community-oriented, prevention-motivated and rooted in social justice) and how these contribute to professional practice.
10. Appreciate the importance of working collaboratively with diverse communities and constituencies (e.g. researchers, practitioners, agencies and organizations).
11. Value commitment to lifelong learning and professional service including active participation in professional organizations.

### PROGRAM PLANNING

The ability to plan for the design, development, implementation, and evaluation of strategies to improve individual and community health.

1. Describe how social, behavioral, environmental, and biological factors contribute to specific individual and community health outcomes.
2. Describe the tasks necessary to assure that program implementation occurs as intended.
3. Explain how the findings of a program evaluation can be used.
4. Explain the contribution of logic models in program development, implementation, and evaluation.
5. Differentiate among goals, measurable objectives, related activities, and expected outcomes for a public health program.
6. Differentiate the purposes of formative, process, and outcome evaluation.
7. Differentiate between qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods in relation to their strengths, limitations, and appropriate uses, and emphases on reliability and validity.
8. Prepare a program budget with justification.
9. In collaboration with others, prioritize individual, organizational, and community concerns and resources for public health programs.
10. Assess evaluation reports in relation to their quality, utility, and impact on public health.
**SYSTEMS THINKING**

The ability to recognize system level properties that result from dynamic interactions among human and social systems and how they affect the relationships among individuals, groups, organizations, communities, and environments.

1. Identify characteristics of a system.
2. Identify unintended consequences produced by changes made to a public health system.
3. Provide examples of feedback loops and "stocks and flows" within a public health system.
4. Explain how systems (e.g. individuals, social networks, organizations, and communities) may be viewed as systems within systems in the analysis of public health problems.
5. Explain how systems models can be tested and validated.
6. Explain how the contexts of gender, race, poverty, history, migration, and culture are important in the design of interventions within public health systems.
7. Illustrate how changes in public health systems (including input, processes, and output) can be measured.
8. Analyze inter-relationships among systems that influence the quality of life of people in their communities.
9. Analyze the effects of political, social and economic policies on public health systems at the local, state, national and international levels.
10. Analyze the impact of global trends and interdependencies on public health related problems and systems.
11. Assess strengths and weaknesses of applying the systems approach to public health problems.
WAIVER REQUEST FOR MPH INTERNSHIP CREDIT
BASED ON PREVIOUS PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERIENCE

This application must be completed by the student in consultation with the student’s faculty advisor. Completed forms must be submitted to the Internship Coordinator in the Dean’s Office and the student’s academic department. Please submit electronically & in hard copy.

Student Name: ___________________________________________ Student ID# __________________

Address: ____________________________________________________________________________

Degree Program: ___________________ Area of Concentration: ______________________________

Name of Faculty Advisor: ___________________ Email: __________________________

Major in Bachelor’s Degree: ___________________ College: ____________________________

Major in Previous Graduate Program: ___________________ College: ______________________

Previous Professional Public Health Experience:

Agency/Organization: ________________________________________________________________

Address: __________________________________________________________________________

Position Held by Student: ___________________ Total Hours Worked ______

Name of Supervisor or Contact Person: ________________________________________________

Phone and E-mail of Supervisor: _____________________________________________________

Name, Title, Credentials/Professional Background of Supervisor __________________________

_________________________________________________________________________________

# Credits being requested ______ Concentration of Internship ___________________________

Please read the “MPH Internship Waiver Request” Handbook in detail before submitting your request. Prepare a brief (5 page maximum) description of the previous public health experience that incorporates the following:

1) Indicates the number of hours worked.

2) Provides an overview of the following:
   a. project/activity/services delivered, etc.;
   b. provider or organizational setting; and,
   c. public health related training received as part of this experience.

3) Notes the credentials/professional background of the supervisor(s).
4) Explains, in detail, the student’s role in the project, specific activities performed and related responsibilities. (Published materials or other deliverables in support of the narrative may be included as an appendix or attachment. For publications, please list the citation or website where work is located.)

5) Demonstrates the public health relevance of the experience. Please address the following questions: How was your role in the project and the work that you did ‘public health’? What were the broader public health implications of your work?

6) Explains and provides specific examples of how the experience meets the minimum criteria outlined in the MPH Internship Waiver Handbook for the following:

   a. the number of credits being requested (pp. 3-4)
   b. specific skills/discipline-specific competencies acquired or used during the experience. Please compose description of experience in 5 pages or less, double-spaced with 11 or 12 size font. NOTE: your description and perceived understanding of the discipline-specific competencies will be used by the committee as a guide to evaluate the application.

Credit Hours Requested: _____

Student’s Signature: ___________________________________________ Date: ____________________

Internship Director’s Signature: ______________________________ Date: ____________________